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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION, 1934

I wish to write a long Preface. I wish merely to explain the history of my work, the scope and plan of this work, and the objects I have held in view.

In separate introductory Notes I have mentioned the useful books to which I have referred, under the headings: Commentaries on the Qur-ān; Translations of the Qur-ān; and Useful Works of Reference. I have similarly explained the system I have followed in the transliteration of Arabic words and names; the abbreviations I have used; and the principal divisions of the Qur-ān.

It may be asked: Is there any need for a fresh English Translation? To those who ask this question I commend a careful consideration of the facts which I have set out in my Note on Translations. After they have read it, I would invite them to take any particular passage in Part I, say ii. 74 or ii. 102, or ii. 164 in the second Part and compare it with any previous version they choose. If they find that I have helped them even the least bit further in understanding its meaning, in appreciating its beauty, or catching something of the grandeur of the original, I should claim that my humble attempt is justified.

It is the duty of every Muslim, man, woman, or child, to read the Qur-ān and understand it according to his own capacity. If any one of us attains to some knowledge or understanding of it by study, contemplation, and the test of life, both outward and inward, it is his duty, according to his capacity, to instruct others, and share with them the joy and peace which result from contact with the spiritual world. The Qur-ān—indeed every religious book—has to be read, not only with the tongue and voice and eyes, but with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience can give us. It is in this spirit that I would have my readers approach the Qur-ān.

It was between the ages of four and five that I first learned to read its Arabic words, to revel in its rhythm and music, and wonder at its meaning. I have a dim recollection of the *Khatm* ceremony which closed that stage. It was called "completion": it really just *began* a spiritual awakening that has gone on ever since. My revered father taught me Arabic, but I must have imbibed from him into my mind something more,—something which told me that all the world's thoughts, all the world's most beautiful languages and literatures, are but vehicles for that ineffable message which comes to the heart in rare moments of ecstasy. The soul of mysticism and ecstasy is in the Qur-ān, as well as that plain guidance for the plain man which a world in a hurry affects to consider as sufficient. It is good to make this personal confession, to an age in which it is in the highest degree unfashionable to speak of religion or spiritual peace or consolation, an age in which words like these draw forth only derision, pity, or contempt.

I have explored Western lands, Western manners, and the depths of Western thought and Western learning, to an extent which has rarely fallen to the lot of an Eastern mortal. But I have never lost touch with my Eastern heritage. Through all my successes and failures I have learned to rely more and more upon the one true thing in all life—the voice that speaks in a tongue above that of mortal man. For me the embodiment of that voice has been in the noble words of the Arabic Qur-ān, which I have tried to translate for myself and apply to my experience again and again. The service of the Qur-ān has been the pride and the privilege of many Muslims. I felt that with such life-experience as has fallen to my lot, my service to the Qur-ān should be to present it in a fitting garb in English. That ambition I have cherished in my mind for more than forty years. I have collected books and materials for it. I have visited places, undertaken journeys, taken notes, sought the society of men, and tried to explore their thoughts and hearts, in order to equip

TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC WORDS AND NAMES

THE following table shows the system which I have followed in transliterating the letters of the Arabic alphabet :—

ا	{ Consonantal	a	ط	.....	t
ء	{ sound }		ظ	.....	z
ا	Long vowel *	a	ع	.....	' (Inverted apostrophe)
ب	.....	b	غ	.....	g
ت	.....	t	ف	.....	f
ث	.....	th	ق	.....	q
ج	.....	j	ك	.....	k
ح	.....	h	ل	.....	l
خ	.....	kh	م	.....	m
د	.....	d	ن	.....	n
ذ	.....	z	ه	.....	h
ر	.....	r	و	consonant	w
ز	.....	z	و	long vowel *	ū
س	.....	s	و	diphthong	au
ش	.....	sh	ي	consonant	y
ص	.....	s	ي	long vowel *	i
ض	.....	dh	ي	diphthong	ai
Short vowels: — (fatha)		a			
— (kasra)		i			
— (dhamma)		u			

1. For the *hamzā* (ء) I have used no distinctive sign. An apostrophe for it and an inverted apostrophe for the 'ain (ع), or vice versa, is confusing to English readers. As a moved consonant, it is sufficiently shown in English by the long or short vowel which moves it, e.g., *ab*, *Raūf*. Where it is a hiatus preceded by a *fatha*, I have shown it by a second *a*: thus, *Iqraa*, the cave of *Hiraa*. In other cases it has not been possible to show it without using a distinctive sign. The name of the Holy Book is usually written *Qurān*; but I prefer to write *Qur-ān*.

2. The final *h* preceded by the short *a* is scarcely pronounced, and I have left it out. Hence *Sūra*, *Fātiḥa*, *Hijra*, etc., where the Arabic spelling would require *Sūrah*, *Fātiḥah*, *Hijrah*, etc.

3. In internationalised words and names I have used the spelling ordinarily current in English; e.g., *Mecca*, *Medina*, *Maulvi*, *Urdu*, *Islam*, *Israel*, *Abraham*, *Jacob*. Here the boundary is thin and rather ill-defined, and possibly my practice and that of my proof-readers have not been absolutely uniform.

4. Some names, e.g., *Ishmael*, *Hagar*, etc., have acquired a contemptuous association in their European forms, while the persons they represent are sacred personages held in great honour in Islam. I have, therefore, avoided the European forms and used the Arabic forms, *Isma'il*, *Hājar*, etc.

* Where it is really pronounced long. Hence, *khalaqnā-hum* but *khalaqnal-insān*; *Abū Sufyān* but *Abul-Qāsim*; *fin-nār* but *fī-hi*.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

I have not used many abbreviations. Those I have used are shown below :—

A.D.	= Anno Domini = year of the Christian Calendar.
A.H.	= Anno Hegiræ = year of the Hijra.
Bk.	= Book.
C.	= The running Commentary, in rhythmic prose.
Cf.	= compare.
d.	= date of death of an author (to show the age in which he lived).
Deut.	= The Book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament.
E. B.	= <i>Encyclopædia Britannica</i> , 14th edition.
e.g.	= <i>exemplis gratia</i> = for example.
Exod.	= The Book of Exodus, Old Testament.
Gen.	= The Book of Genesis, Old Testament.
Hijra	= year of the Hijra.
M. M. A.	= Maulvi Muḥammad 'Alī's Translation of the Qur-ān.
M. P.	= Mr. M. Pickthall's <i>The Meaning of the Glorious Koran</i> .
	= note.
	= notes.
	= The Book of Numbers, Old Testament.
	= page.
	= pages.
	= Qur-ān.
	= Qur-ān, Sūra 20, verse 25.
	= Revelation of St. John, New Testament.
	= sūra.
	= verse.
	= verses.
	= <i>videlicet</i> = namely.
etc.	= the end of one Sīpāra, two Sīpāras, etc. A Sīpāra is arithmetically the 30th part of the Qur-ān.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

INTRODUCTION

- C. 1.—Glory to God Most High, full of Grace and Mercy;
He created All, including Man.
To Man He gave a special place in His Creation.
He honoured man to be His Agent,
And to that end, endued him with understanding,
Purified his affections, and gave him spiritual insight;
So that man should understand Nature.
Understand himself,
And know God through His wondrous Signs,
And glorify Him in Truth, reverence, and unity.
- C. 2.—For the fulfilment of this great trust
Man was further given a Will,
So that his acts should reflect God's universal Will and Law,
And his mind, freely choosing,
Should experience the sublime joy
Of being in harmony with the Infinite,
And with the great drama of the world around him,
And with his own spiritual growth.
- C. 3.—But, created though he was in the best of moulds,
Man fell from Unity when his Will was warped,
And he chose the crooked path of Discord.
And sorrow and pain, selfishness and degradation,
Ignorance and hatred, despair and unbelief
Poisoned his life, and he saw shapes of evil
In the physical, moral, and spiritual world,
And in himself.
- C. 4.—Then did his soul rise against himself,
And his self-discord made discord between kith and kin:
Men began to fear the strong and oppress the weak,
To boast in prosperity, and curse in adversity,
And to flee each other, pursuing phantoms,
For the truth and reality of Unity
Was gone from their minds.
- C. 5.—When men spread themselves over the earth,
And became many nations,
Speaking diverse languages,
And observing diverse customs and laws;

Sūra 1.

Fatiha, or the Opening Chapter.¹⁸

1. In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.¹⁹

2. Praise be to God,
The Cherisher and Sustainer²⁰ of
the Worlds;

3. Most Gracious, Most Merciful;

4. Master of the Day of Judgment.

5. Thee do we worship,²¹
And Thine aid we seek.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

18. By universal consent it is rightly placed at the beginning of the Qur-ān, as summing up, in marvellously terse and comprehensive words, man's relation to God in contemplation and prayer. In our spiritual contemplation the first words should be those of praise. If the praise is from our inmost being, it brings us into union with God's will. Then our eyes see all good, peace, and harmony. Evil, rebellion, and conflict are purged out. They do not exist for us, for our eyes are lifted up above them in praise. Then we see God's attributes better (verses 2-4). This leads us to the attitude of worship and acknowledgment (verse 5). And finally comes prayer for guidance, and a contemplation of what guidance means (verses 6-7).

God needs no praise, for He is above all praise; He needs no petition, for He knows our needs better than we do ourselves; and His bounties are open without asking, to the righteous and the sinner alike. The prayer is for our own spiritual education, consolation, and confirmation.

That is why the words in this Sūra are given to us in the form in which we should utter them. When we reach enlightenment, they flow spontaneously from us.

19. The Arabic words "*Rahmān*" and "*Rahīm*," translated "Most Gracious" and "Most Merciful" are both intensive forms referring to different aspects of God's attribute of Mercy. The Arabic intensive is more suited to express God's attributes than the superlative degree in English. The latter implies a comparison with other beings, or with other times or places, while there is no being like unto God, and He is independent of Time and Place. Mercy may imply pity, long-suffering, patience, and forgiveness, all of which the sinner needs and God Most Merciful bestows in abundant measure. But there is a Mercy that goes before even the need arises, the Grace which is ever watchful, and flows from God Most Gracious to all His creatures, protecting them, preserving them, guiding them, and leading them to clearer light and higher life. For this reason the attribute *Rahmān* (Most Gracious) is not applied to any but God, but the attribute *Rahīm* (Merciful), is a general term, and may also be applied to Men. To make us contemplate these boundless gifts of God, the formula: "In the name of God Most Gracious, Most Merciful": is placed before every Sūra of the Qur-ān (except the ninth), and repeated at the beginning of every act by the Muslim who dedicates his life to God, and whose hope is in His Mercy.

Opinion is divided whether the *Bismillāh* should be numbered as a separate verse or not. It is unanimously agreed that it is a part of the Qur-ān. Therefore it is better to give it an independent number in the first Sūra. For subsequent Sūras it is treated as an introduction or head-line, and therefore not numbered.

20. The Arabic word *Rabb*, usually translated Lord, has also the meaning of cherishing, sustaining, bringing to maturity. God cares for all the worlds He has created.

There are many worlds,—astronomical and physical worlds, worlds of thought, spiritual worlds, and so on. In every one of them, God is all in all. We express only one aspect of it when we say: The mystical division between (1) *Nāsūt*, the human world knowable by the senses, (2) *Malakūt*, the invisible world of angels, and (3) *Lāhūt*, the divine world of Reality, requires a whole volume to explain it.

21. On realizing in our souls God's love and care, His grace and mercy, and His power and justice (as Ruler of the Day of Judgment), the immediate result is that we bend in the act of worship, and see both our shortcomings and His all-sufficient power. The emphatic form means that not only do we reach the position of worshipping God and asking for His help, but we worship Him alone and ask for His aid only. For there is none other than He worthy of our devotion and able to help us. The plural "we" indicates that we associate ourselves with all who seek God, thus strengthening ourselves and strengthening them in a fellowship of faith.

Guide us the straight way,

Way of those on whom
Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
whose (portion)
Thou wilt not take in
Thy Wrath,²²
Who go not astray.²³

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ



When we translate by the English word "guide," we shall have to say: Guide us to and in the straight Way." For we may be wandering aimlessly, and the first step is to find the Way; and the second is to keep in the Way: our own wisdom may fail in either case. The straight Way is the narrow Way, or the steep Way, which many people shun (xc. 11). By the world's standards the straight Way is sometimes stigmatized and the crooked Way praised. How are we to keep in the straight Way? We must ask for God's guidance. With a little spiritual insight we shall see which are the paths that lead to the light of God's grace, and which are those that walk in the darkness of Wrath. God's Grace would also help our judgment.

Thus the words relating to Grace are connected actively with God; those relating to Wrath are connected passively. In the one case God's Mercy encompasses us beyond our deserts. In the other case our own actions are responsible for the Wrath,—the negative of Grace, Peace, or Harmony.

There are two categories?—those who are in the darkness of Wrath and those who stray? The first category are those who deliberately break God's law; the second those who stray out of carelessness. Both are responsible for their own acts or omissions. In opposition to both are the paths that lead to the light of God's Grace: for His Grace not only protects them from active wrong (they only submit their will to Him) but also from straying into paths of temptation or error. The negative gair should be construed as applying not to the way, but as describing the path that leads from two dangers by God's Grace.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRA II (*Baqara*)

As the Opening Sūra sums up in seven beautiful verses the essence of the Qur-ān, so this Sūra sums up in 286 verses the whole teaching of the Qur-ān. It is a closely reasoned argument.

Summary.—It begins (verses 1-29) with mystic doctrine as to the three kinds of men and how they receive God's message.

This leads to the story of the creation of man, the high destiny intended for him, his fall, and the hope held out to him (ii. 30-39).

Israel's story is then told according to their own records and traditions—what privileges they received and how they abused them (ii. 40-86), thus illustrating again as by a parable the general story of man.

In particular, reference is made to Moses and Jesus and their struggles with an unruly people: how the people of the Book played false with their own lights and in their pride rejected Muhammad, who came in the true line of apostolic succession (ii. 87-121).

They falsely laid claim to the virtues of Father Abraham: he was indeed a righteous Imām, but he was the progenitor of Ismā'il's line (Arabs) as well as of Israel's line, and he with Ismā'il built the Ka'ba (Temple of Mecca) and purified it, thus establishing a common religion, of which Islam is the universal exponent (ii. 122-141).

The Ka'ba was now to be the centre of universal worship and the symbol of Islamic unity (ii. 142-167).

The Islamic *Ummat* (brotherhood) having thus been established with its definite centre and symbol, ordinances are laid down for the social life of the community, with the proviso (ii. 177) that righteousness does not consist in formalities, but in faith, kindness, prayer, charity, probity, and patience under suffering. The ordinances relate to food and drink, bequests, fasts, *jihād*, wine and gambling, treatment of orphans and women, etc. (ii. 168-242).

Lest the subject of *jihād* should be misunderstood, it is taken up again in the story of Saul, Goliath and David, in contrast to the story of Jesus (ii. 243-253).

And so the lesson is enforced that true virtue lies in practical deeds of manliness, kindness, and good faith (ii. 254-283), and God's nature is called to mind in the sublime *Ayat-ul-Kur-ī*, the Verse of the Throne (ii. 255).

The Sūra ends with an exhortation to Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal Responsibility, and Prayer (ii. 284-286).

This is the longest Sūra of the Qur-ān, and in it occurs the longest verse (ii. 282). The name of the Sūra is from the Parable of the Heifer in ii. 67-71, which illustrates the insufficiency of carping obedience. When faith is lost, people put off obedience with various excuses: even when at last they obey in the letter, they fail in the spirit, which means that they get fossilized, and their self-sufficiency prevents them from seeing that spiritually they are not alive but dead. For life is movement, activity, striving, fighting against baser things. And this is the burden of the Sūra.

This is in the main an early Medina Sūra.

C. 44.—The Message of God is a guide that is sure
(ii. 1-29) To those who seek His light. But those
Who reject faith are blind: their hearts
Are sealed. Woe to the hypocrites,
Self-deceived and deceiving others,
With mockery on their lips, and mischief
In their hearts, and fear; the clouds
That bring fertilizing rain to others,
To them bring but deafening thunder-peals
And lightning flashes blinding to their eyes,



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

١- اَلَمْ ۝

٢- ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۤ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝

٣- الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ

الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۝

٤- وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَ

and Sūras iii, xxix, xxx, xxxi and of nations, their past, and of Islam. In xxix a similar Future and Triumph, Past and God is the source of all a common thread, the mystery most of it is pure conjecture. symbols, of which it is unprofitable comes from the inner light when

is that each initial represents an three which will fit in with these letters are the initial, the final and the al, and Muhammad.—the source of a Human Messenger through whom it was to the first Sūra (which *Baqara* really is letters, why to these six only? letters represent, A is a breathing and comes from the middle of the mouth, and M is a of the Beginning, Middle and End? If so, are aly of Life, Growth, and Death—the Beginning, the first and the last letters of the Greek Beginning and the End, and give one of the titles and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and (Rev. i. 8.) The symbolism of the three things is

with the root, signify: (1) the fear of God, which, in the Old Testament, is the beginning of Wisdom; and part from evil; (3) hence righteousness, piety, good in the imagination, only one or other of these ideas can be 17; and lxxiv. 56, n. 5808. will be physical gifts, e.g., food, clothing, houses, gardens, power, birth and the opportunities flowing from it, into good and evil, understanding of men, the and moderation. But we are also to give out of to the well-being of others. We are to be neither users nor thoughtless prodigals.

Sūra 114.

Nās, or Mankind.

In the name of God, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Say: I seek refuge⁶³⁰⁷
With the Lord
And Cherisher of Mankind,⁶³⁰⁸

2. The King (or Ruler)
Of Mankind,

3. The God (or Judge)
Of Mankind,—

4. From the mischief
Of the Whisperer.⁶³⁰⁹
(Of Evil), who withdraws
(After his whisper),—

5. (The same) who whispers
Into the hearts of Mankind,—

6. Among Jinns
And among Men.⁶³¹⁰



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۝

۝ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۝

۝ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ۝

۝ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ۝

۝ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ۝

۝ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ۝

CONCLUSION

C. 295.—Thus spake, inspired, our holy Prophet,
Muhammad, on whom we invoke God's blessings
For ever and ever ;—we who are heirs
To his teaching, his exemplary life,
And the golden thread which he inwove
Into the web of human history.
In pious retreats he prayed ; much thought
He gave to Life's most obstinate tangles ;
'Gainst odds he strove with might and main ;
Wisely he led ; gently he counselled ;
And firmly he subdued Evil.

C. 296.—Mantle-clad, ⁶³¹¹ he solved the most baffling
Mysteries. His soul would scale
The heights of Heaven, yet showered its love
On the weak and lowly of this earth.
Like a cloud that catches the glory of the Sun,
He threw his protecting shade on all.
The widow's cry, and the orphan's, found
An answer in his heart; as did
The cry of Penury and Need.
He searched out those who felt no need,
Being by pride or ignorance blinded,
And he fulfilled their real wants.
His last great charge summed up the rule
Of spiritual life in linking Faith
With one universal Brotherhood.
Ah ! ne'er shall we see such life again !

C. 297.—But his clarion voice still speaks his message.
His love and wisdom still pour forth
Without stint the inexhaustible Treasures
Of God, for whoso'er will bring
A purified heart to receive them.
And ne'er did the world, impoverished
By its own wayward lusts and greed,
Need those Treasures more than now !

6307. The previous Sūra pointed to the necessity of seeking God's protection against external factors which might affect an individual. Here the need of protection from internal factors, mankind being viewed as a whole, is pointed out. For this reason the threefold relation in which man stands to God is mentioned, as explained in the next note.

6308. Man's relation to God may be viewed in three aspects : (1) God is his Lord, Maker, and Cherisher ; God sustains him and cares for him ; He provides him with all the means for his growth and development, and for his protection against evil ; (2) God is his king or ruler ; more than any earthly king. God has authority to guide man's conduct, and lead him to ways which will make for his welfare ; and He has given him laws ; and (3) God is He to Whom mankind must return, to give an account of all their deeds in this life (ii. 156) ; God will be the Judge ; He is the goal of the Hereafter, and the only Being entitled to man's worship at any time. From all these aspects man could and should seek God's protection against evil.

6309. Evil insinuates itself in all sorts of insidious ways from within so as to sap man's will, which was given to man by God. This power of evil may be Satan or his host of evil ones, or evil men or the evil inclinations within man's own will for there are "evil ones among men and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception" (vi. 112). They secretly whisper evil and then withdraw, to make their net the more subtle and alluring.

6310. This last clause amplifies the description of the sources from which the whisper of evil may emanate : they may be men whom you may see or invisible spirits of evil working within. See last note. So long as we put ourselves in God's protection, and trust in God, evil cannot really touch us in our essential and inner life.

6311. An epithet of mystic meaning, applied to the Prophet in the Qur-ān. See lxxiv. 1, n. 5778. I have in my mind a reminiscence of an Urdu Na't, or Song in praise of the holy Prophet.